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Sons of Utah Pioneers Cedar Chapter

The following talk was given by **Elder L. Lional Kendrick**

General Authority Emeritus; Member of first Quorum of the Seventy

It was given at a Fireside with a General Authority. In the Fourth North L.D.S. Chapel, 28 Sept 2003 at 7:00 pm, in Cedar City, Utah.

The title of his talk: **Liberty.** It is a powerful address that needs to be remembered, and, preserved.

LIBERTY
Elder L. Lionel Kendrick

The events of September 11, 2001 have been unprecedented in the history of this great land of liberty. They have given cause for all to pause and ponder the principle of liberty and to put life in its proper prospective.

In the scriptures, liberty is also referred to as freedom and agency. It is the power to choose for oneself between good and evil. It is an inalienable right of all of Heavenly Father's children (see *D&C 98:5*).

It is eternal in nature as it existed in the pre-earth life. Liberty is the foundational principle in the Plan of Salvation. Each of Heavenly Father's spiritual children had the opportunity to choose to follow the Savior or to follow Satan in the War in Heaven (see *D&C 29:36*).

This was the beginning of the battle between good and evil, between choice and control, between liberty and limits, between light and darkness, between freedom and force.

The battle from the beginning that will be the fight to the finish will be for the choices that we make. The quality of these choices is dependent upon knowing what is true. Truth is essential for a person to be truly free. We are counseled “*Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32). The freedom to function is predicated upon the existence of a free society where faith prevails over fear.

America, the land of liberty, was founded and defended by heroes and martyrs. We have once again seen real heroes in action, some of whom paid the ultimate price in attempting to save others.

SPIRITUAL ROOTS

This nation is great because of its divine origin and destiny and because it was founded with deep spiritual roots.

1. Columbus

The hand of the Lord directed the voyage of Columbus to America. This accomplishment was considered in its

time to be greater than putting a man on the moon in our time.

The Holy Ghost inspired Columbus in his search for the new world. Columbus acknowledged the influence of the Spirit in his life:

“From my first youth onward, I was a seaman and have continued until this day. I have spoken...with learned man...The Lord was well disposed to my desire, and he bestowed upon me courage, and understanding, knowledge of seafaring. He gave me in abundance of astrology...and of geometry and astronomy likewise.

He gave me joy and cunning in drawing maps...our Lord unlocked my mind, sent me upon the sea, and gave me the fire for the deed. Those who heard of my enterprise called it foolish, mocked me and laughed. But who can doubt but that the Holy Ghost inspired me?”

(Jacob Wasserman, Columbus, Don Quixote of the Seas, cited in The Great Prologue, p. 26)

2. **Signers of the Declaration of Independence**

The signers of the Declaration of Independence were inspired men. *They* had great courage and expressed a righteous resolve.

"We mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."

One out of nine of these inspired men gave their lives for the cause of liberty. Eighteen were wealthy men, seventeen suffered total property loss. In spite of these losses, none lost their sacred honor; there was not a single defector, even *when* it seemed that victory would be impossible.

LAND OF LIBERTY

This great land of liberty has been established by the Lord as a place that His children may be free (see *3 Nephi 21:4*). It is here in this land of liberty that the Lord inspired the Constitution as the divine law of governance. He counseled:

“And that law of the land which is constitutional, supporting the principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges, belong to all mankind, and is justifiable before me...I the Lord God made you free, therefore ye are free indeed; and the law also maketh you free.” (D&C 98:5,8) (see also D&C 101:76-77).

Our America the beautiful is hallowed and sacred soil. It is the place that was prepared for the restoration of the Gospel. It is the place that has the governance of His Church and Kingdom on the earth today. It is the place to which He will return in His power and majestic glory.

It is the place that the agency of man can be freely exercised as it was ordained to do so by the Lord when He proclaimed:

“That every man may act in doctrine and example...according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, and every man may be accountable for his own sins in the Day of Judgment.” (D&C 101:78).

In the dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple the Prophet Joseph Smith pleaded with the Lord:

“Have mercy, O Lord, upon all the nations of the earth; have mercy upon the rulers of our land; may those principles, which were so honorably and nobly defended, namely, the constitution of our land, by our fathers, be established forever.” (D&C 109:54).

This great land of liberty was destined to come forth to fulfill its divine purposes. It was to be the land of promise, the land of liberty, and indeed a choice land. After his arrival, Lehi proclaimed:

“...we have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands; a land which the Lord God hath covenanted...unto me and to my children forever, and also all those

who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord.” (2 Nephi 1:5).

“...it shall be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity, if so it shall be because of iniquity.” (2 Nephi 1:7).

“And if...they shall keep his commandments they shall be blessed...and there shall be none to molest them, nor to take away the land of their inheritance; and they shall dwell safely forever.” (2 Nephi 1:9).

In the preservation of this choice land, we must not only have a love of liberty but we must also be aware that the fulfillment of the Lord’s promises are predicated upon the avoidance of iniquity in this land.

Moroni added his witness as to the sacredness of this land. He also expressed the great need for the people of this land of liberty to love and to serve God in order to see the fulfillment of the promises of the Lord:

“For behold this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free

from bondage, and from captivity and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ... (Ether 2:12).

The Lord has given us a comforting and powerful promise concerning this great land:

“And this land shall be a land of liberty...and there shall be no kings upon the land...and I will fortify this land against all nations....” (2 Nephi 10:11-12).

King Mosiah spoke of the need for unity and concern for others to exist in this land. It was to be a land of laws guaranteeing the rights of all to be protected:

“I desire that this land be a land of liberty, and every man may enjoy his rights and privileges alike....” (Mosiah 29:32).

UNDERSTANDING

The events that happened on September 11, 2001, must be viewed in an eternal context and not in isolation. These horrific happenings are a part

of the ever increasing intensity in the battle for the freedom of Heavenly Father's children.

Perhaps the description of the apostle Paul is appropriate today giving proper perspective:

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”
(Ephesians 6:12).

There seems to be some similar motives and means that are used by the adversary in his role as the destroyer. His motivation from the very beginning is to destroy the agency of man (see *Moses 4:3*), to destroy souls (see *D&C 10:27*) and to destroy the work of God. (See *D&C 10:23*).

His methods of destruction have been similar from the very beginning. His works of darkness are designed and delivered in secret. The murder of Able by Cain was planned in secret. Cain swore an oath of secrecy with the adversary:

“And Satan said unto Cain: Swear unto me by thy throat, and if thou tell it thou shalt die and swear thy brethren by their heads, and by the

living God, that they tell it not for if they tell it, they shall surely die....” (Moses 5:29).

*“And all these things were done in secret ”
(Moses 5:30).*

Secret combinations have been a main *method* used by Satan. These secret combinations *are* often wide spread among nations. Moroni *spoke* of these destructive secret combinations:

“And they were kept up by the power of the devil to administer these oaths unto the people to keep them in darkness, to help such as sought power to gain power, and to murder, and to plunder, and to lie, and to commit all manner of wickedness.” (Ether 8:16).

This destructive method of Satan will *not* have long term success. Moroni warns:

“And whatsoever nation shall uphold such secret combination...behold they shall be destroyed....” (Ether 8:22).

The shocking scenes that we saw on our television sets September 11, 2001, are *strikingly* similar to those that were seen by Alma and

Amulek. Wicked men maliciously murdered innocent men, women, and children because they believed in the living God. They cast them into the fire. They experienced a painful death.

Alma and Amulek were forced to observe the suffering of these souls. Mormon described this scene with these words:

“And when Amulek saw the pains of the women and children who were consuming in the fire, he also was pained.” (Alma 14:10).

The heavens must have wept along with us during that dreadful day of darkness when we witnessed the attacks in New York City and Washington DC. The description of that day is reminiscent of the day spoken of by the Lord in the revelation given to Thomas Marsh through the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said, it was:

“A day of burning, a day of...weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation.” (D&C 112:24).

It is always sad to see people suffer but even more sad to see innocent people suffer as the result of sinful acts of others.

Some have questioned why this could have happened to those who were without cause. Our knowledge and understanding of these matters is limited. It is sometimes difficult to understand how the agency of one person can be allowed to cause damage or death of another person.

Perhaps a partial explanation may be found in the scriptures and in the counsel of the prophets. In the grand council in Heaven the decision was made to organize this earth as a place upon which we would dwell. (See *Abraham 3:24*).

The Savior expressed one of the purposes for the Creation when He said:

“And we will prove them herewith, to see if they would do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them.” (Abraham 3:25).

The Savior declared:

“My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them....” (D&C 136:31).

Perhaps the counsel given by Moroni concerning the principle of faith would be appropriate for us to ponder as we seek for answers to questions that seem to have no answers:

“...wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.” (Ether 12:6)

Alma gives us further insight as we strive to understand what has happened:

“For the Lord suffereth the righteous to be slain that his judgment may come upon the wicked...” (Alma 60:13).

Elder James E. Faust gave added insight into the answer to the question of why it happened.

“There is a divine purpose in the adversities we encounter every day. They prepare, they purge, they purify, and thus they bless.” (James E. Faust, Ensign, May 1979, p. 59).

The words of President Spencer W. Kimball add clarity with this counsel:

“Now, we find many people critical when a righteous person is killed...Some become bitter when oft repeated prayers seem unanswered... IF all the sick were healed, if all the righteous were protected and the wicked destroyed, the whole program of the Father would be annulled, and the basic principle of the Gospel free agency, would be ended.” (President Spencer W. Kimball, “Tragedy or Destiny,” Improvement Era, March 1966, pp 180, 210)

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

We are blessed to live in a time when prophecies of old are being fulfilled. The events that we have seen are a part of the signs of the times that we live in during these latter days. the Savior described the conditions that would exist in the times we live in:

1. Hearts would be hardened.

“And the love of men shall wax cold and iniquity shall abound.” (D&C 45:27).

“...men will harden their hearts against me, and they will take up the

sword, one against another, and they will kill one another.” (D&C 45:33).

2. Wars and rumors of wars

“And in that day shall be heard of wars and rumors of wars, and the whole earth shall be in commotion.” (D&C 45:26).

“Ye hear of wars in foreign lands but behold, I say unto you they are NIGH even at your doors, and not many years hence ye shall hear of wars in your own lands.” (D&C 45:63).

3. Fear will increase

“And all things shall be in commotion; and surely mens hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people.” (D&C 88:91).

4. Good will be made to seem evil

“Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness” (2 Nephi 15:20)

TRAGEDY

This great land of liberty is no stranger to tragedy nor is it a stranger to the triumphs that follow these tragedies. During these past 100 years we have experienced two major world wars and four significant conflicts of Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm and again in Iraq. We have lived through Pearl Harbor, the assassination of a president, the loss of the Challenger and Columbia space shuttles, the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, and the first bombing of the World Trade Center.

This most recent tragedy of the suicide airplane attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are perhaps the deadliest of all that have taken place on this sacred soil. Just as we have overcome these past tragedies, we too will overcome these latest ones.

Each of these great disasters has and will be recorded in rich detail in the history of this country. Many of these events have been indelibly imprinted in the memory of our minds. Sadly, sometimes the lessons we should have learned will be eventually lost.

As members of the Church, we are not strangers to tragic events, as our own Church history has been replete with these recorded events. Sadly, the history of the world has ONLY fragments of the facts of these faith-PROMOTING experiences. The details of the hallowed HUMAN hurts have somehow escaped the recorded HISTORY of our great nation. The suffering of the SAINTS AT the hands of the mobs in Missouri, the MASSACRE AT Haun's Mill, the extinction order of GOVERNOR Boggs, the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, the burning OF the Nauvoo temple are only a passing period ON a page in the history of the world.

We remember these events well, as they ARE recorded in our spiritual memory banks. WE ALSO remember the trail of shallow and sometimes frozen graves that are placed across the PLAINS with no markers for future memory. Our HISTORY is not only that of a trail of tears from Palmyra TO Parley's Canyon, but one that has seen the fulfillment of the prophesy that was given BY THE Savior:

"And also those to whom these commandments were given, might have power to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it FORTH"

out of obscurity and out of darkness, the ONLY true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased..." (D&C 1:30).

These triumphs were not easy battles but they were essential battles. They represent victory OF virtue over vice. It was a success of good over evil. It was a triumph of testimony over tyranny.

The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are yet another in a series of battles against the forces of evil. This and future battles will be the same as those fought in the past. just as the price of victory in past battles has left a trail of tears, this may also be true in the present and future encounters.

To keep this and other tragedies in their proper perspective we can find comfort in the counsel of Elder Neal A. Maxwell when he said

"Sin is the only real and lasting tragedy."
(Elder Neal A. Maxwell, Ensign, May 1983, p.11).

He also gave counsel of clarity that should give us courage as we respond to the tragedies that we experience or that we see in the lives of others;

“For the faithful, our finest hours are sometimes during or just following our darkest hours.” Elder Neal A. Maxwell, Ensign, May 1984, p. 22)

BLESSINGS

We must not become overwhelmed and fearful as a result of the tragedy that we have seen. We must not have doubt or become discouraged. We must not be depressed. The Savior counseled that *“after much tribulation come the blessings.”* (D&C 58:4).

In spite of the terrible tribulations that we have seen, we have also seen many miracles and blessings. It seems that we have been shaken and there has been an awakening in each of us of the important things that we have allowed to become dormant in our lives.

1. Unity

This nation has perhaps never been more unified than following 911. Barriers had been broken. The spirit of contentment

seemed to cease. Our government became unified.

Officials were bound together with *the* people in a sacred cause to preserve *our* liberties and our freedoms.

2. Patriotism

Rarely have I seen such a fervent *spirit* patriotism exhibited. It has moved *many* to tears. Flags grace this land of *liberty*. Patriotic music can be heard *everywhere*. It is now common to hear the Pledge *of* Allegiance to the flag and to see *salutes of* respect.

3. Love

There was an increase of love for *country*, for family and for one another. Spontaneous expressions of love are frequently seen.

4. Spirituality

We have been awakened to a *greater* sensitivity to the things of the Spirit

More prayers have been rendered *IN* public as well as in private. Church attendance has been increased.

5. Service

Countless hours of selfless service *have* been given as the nation has closed *RANKS* to assist others in their times of need. *IT* seems that large numbers have been:

“Willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light... and are willing to mourn with those that mourn...and comfort those that stand in need of comfort...” (Mosiah 18:8-9).

6. Sacrifice

We have seen great examples of *SACRIFICE* on the part of large numbers of *PEOPLE*. Without hesitation, people put *THEMSELVES* in harms way to assist those who *WERE IN* trouble. Many lived the higher law of love as they laid down their life for *THEIR* fellow beings.

Sadly, many of these positives have passed. *OUR*
memories of these events have faded all too *FAST*
Mormon counsels:

*“Thus we see how quick the children of men
do forget the Lord their God, yea, how quick
to do iniquity, and to be led away by the evil
one.” (Alma 46:8)*

The Savior gave insight as to the natural
tendencies of man when He said:

*“In the day of their peace they esteemed *LIGHTLY*
my counsel; but in the day of their trouble, *OF*
necessity they feel after me.” (D&C 101:8)*

PROMISES

The Lord has given us powerful promises *that*
should sustain and strengthen us in our times *OF*
need:

*“Therefore, fear not, little flock, do good
let heaven and hell combine against you
for if ye are built upon my rock, they
cannot prevail.” (D&C 6:34)*

"Wherefore be of good cheer, and do NOT fear, for I the Lord am with you, and shall stand by you..." (D&C 68:6)

COUNSEL

In our present and future times of need, we can take great comfort and confidence in the counsel that we receive from the scriptures. They will give us great hope and will strengthen our faith and our resolve. We should prayerfully ponder the following and countless other passages of counsel that the Lord has provided for us in the sacred scriptures.

"...be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." (I Peter 3:14).

"Look unto me in every thought, doubt not, Fear not." (D&C 6:36).

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding." (Proverbs 3:5).

"Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil," (Ephesians 6:11).

*"Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not FEAR,
for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by
you..."(D&C 68:6)*

*"Fear not, let your hearts be comforted... "
(D&C 98:1)*

*"Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; Let
earth and hell combine against you, for IF ye
are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail."
(D&C 6:34)*

*"If ye are prepared ye shall not fear." (D&C
38:30)*

*"Therefore, whosoever belongeth to my church
need not fear, for such shall inherit the kingdom
of heaven."(D&C 10: 55)*

*"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but
of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."
(2 Timothy 1:7)*

NEVER ALONE

During the darkest days of our life we *MUST* always remember that we are never alone.

1. Holy Ghost

One of the great roles of the Holy Ghost is to give comfort to those in need. *the* Spirit fills us with hope and with *PERFECT* love. (See *Moroni 8:26*). He will *QUICKEN* our knowledge and understanding *OF* things (*D&C 88:11*), and will “*teach... the peaceful things of the kingdom.*” (*D&C 36:2*).

2. Savior

The Savior knows each of us in a *PERSONAL* way. He has given us words of *COMFORT* and cheer when He said:

“I say unto you that mine eyes ARE upon you, I am in your midst AND ye cannot see me.” (D&C 38:7).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks explains the meaning of the Savior being in our *MIDST*;

"The Savior is in our midst, sometimes personally, frequently through His servants, and always by His Spirit."
(Oaks, Dallin H., The Lords Way, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1991, p. 14)

3. Scriptures

We can receive great comfort and counsel as we prayerfully ponder the scriptures during our times of need. When faced with an increased need for understanding and direction we should search the scriptures for answers. Nephi counseled:

"Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do." (2 Nephi 32:3).

4. Prophets

During the days ahead we must carefully listen to the counsel of the living prophets. Their counsel takes precedence over all other counsel. As Satan increases his works of destruction, there is an ever

increasing need to listen to the voice of the prophet.

The Savior has counseled us to listen to our priesthood leaders as well as the prophet:

"...whether by mine own voice or the voice of my servants, it is the same." (D&C 1:38).

Some unfortunately choose not to listen. At times they resist counsel. It is no wonder that the Lord lamented:

"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say." (LUKE 6:46).

There is great safety in troubled times in listening to the voice of the prophets and our priesthood leaders. If we do so, we have no need to fear what may come in the future.

5. Patriarchal Blessings

Our patriarchal blessing can be a *great* source of strength, comfort, and *direction* during our times of need.

President James E. Faust taught ~~the~~ principle of power in a patriarchal blessing:

“God knows our spirits; He knows our strengths and weaknesses. He knows our capabilities and our potential. Our patriarchal blessings indicate what the Lord expects of us and what our potential is. Our blessings can encourage us when we are discouraged, strengthen us when we are fearful, comfort us when we are in sorrow, give courage when we are filled with anxiety, lift us when we are weak in spirit.”

(Faust, James E. “Patriarchal Blessings,” New Era, November 1982, page 6).

CONCLUSION

Our souls have been stirred with a **wide RANGE** of feelings from shock to sharpness, from **anxiety** to anger, from surprise to supplication. **We MUST** not be overcome by what we have seen and **heard**.

This is a time for reflection and for **renewing** of our spirits. It is a time to be in control **of our** lives and to make righteous choices.

We must, as Joshua of old "**choose this day whom [we] will serve.**" (Joshua 24:15). We must **choose**:

Faith and Not Fear
Hope and Not Helplessness
Obedience and Not Opposition
Repentance and Not Rebellion
Determination and Not Depression
Sacrifice and Not Selfishness
Service and Not Slothfulness
Work and Not Worry
Trust and Not Trifle
Spirituality and Not Sensuality

Choose to follow those things that you **KNOW** to be true. Remember that righteous **choices** bring forth righteous results.

I am at peace with what the future holds. *The* torch will soon be passed to the next generation *to* protect the divinely inspired Constitution *of this* great land of liberty.

They will stand in the forefront in the battle *with* the adversary, in the defense of our country *and of* our freedom. I have great faith in both their *will* and in their ability to be successful with *this* sacred trust.

We must remember that the "gates of *hell*" must not and can not prevail in this great land *of* the free and the brave. Our love for liberty *must* continue to grow as it did in the lives of our foundational fathers and in the lives of our pioneer ancestors.

The forgotten lessons of liberty must be recalled, replayed and relayed to the next generation *by* those who love liberty. Our liberty must *never be* lost.

This must be the legacy that our generation *leaves* to the chosen generations of the covenant *people* who will prepare this land of liberty for the *return* of the Savior.

**May God bless you and may God bless *America*.
In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.**